

Message Text

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65

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-11 ACDA-10 PPTE-00 SCA-01 /097 W

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R 020650Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7583

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS GABORONE 00167

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BC, RH

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA CLARIFIES RHODESIA POLICY

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA HAS ISSUED AN OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT DISASSOCIATING ITSELF FROM AND REFUTING STATEMENTS BY FRANCISTOWN MAYOR AND BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY REGIONAL ORGANIZER JAMES NTUANE REGARDING BOTSWANA-RHODESIA RELATIONS, WHICH WERE PUBLISHED IN JANUARY 26 ISSUE BULAWAYO CHRONICLE PRESS STATEMENT DENIES THAT BOTSWANA SUPPORTS ANY SINGLE FACTION OF ANC, DENOUNCES THE RHODESIAN IMPOSED BORDER CURFEW AND DENIES THAT THERE IS ANY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON TRAVEL BY BOTSWANA CITIZENS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

2. TEXT OF PRESS STATEMENT FOLLOWS: QUOTE: PRESS STATEMENT BY UNCLASSIFIED

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A SPOKEMAN OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT. IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED

'BOTSWANA PEOPLE WANT PEACE' WHICH APPEARED ON MONDAY 26 JANUARY 1976 IN THE BULAWAYO CHRONICLE THERE ARE SEVERAL STATEMENTS ON BOTSWANA FOREIGN POLICY WHICH ARE ATTRIBUTED TO MR. JAMES NTUANE, THE MAYOR OF FRANCISTOWN AND REGIONAL ORGANIZER OF THE BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY. MR. NTUANE IS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID THAT 'WE DO SUPPORT MR. NKOMO IN HIS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FACE TO FACE WITH MR. SMITH'S GOVERNMENT.'

3. THIS STATEMENT BY MR. NTUANE IS A GROSS MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS AND DOES NOT REFLECT BOTSWANA'S FOREIGN POLICY. BOTSWANA HAS NOT DECLARED ITS SUPPORT FOR ANY FACTION IN ZIMBABWE. THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT THE ONLY SETTLEMENT WHOSE VIABILITY AND DURABILITY WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY ASSURED AND GUARANTEED IS ONE WHICH IS NEGOTIATED BY REPRESENTATIVES WHO ARE SUPPORTED BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE WORKED FOR THE MERGER OF ALL THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS UNDER A UNITED ANC IN DECEMBER 1974. WE FIRMLY BELIEVED THEN, AND WE STILL DO NOW, THAT UNITY WOULD BE THE BEST WEAPON THAT THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE CAN USE AGAINST THE SMITH REGIME.

4. WE WOULD NOT WISH TO ENCOURAGE SPLINTERING AMONG ZIMBABWEANS BY LENDING SUPPORT TO ONE OR OTHER OF THE ANC FACTIONS. THUS MR. NTUANE'S STATEMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT GOVERNMENT'S POLICY.

5. MR. NTUANE IS ALSO REPORTED AS HAVING SAID THAT THE ILLEGAL REGIME'S BORDER CURFEW WAS DESIRABLE AND THAT THERE IS AN AGREEMENT ALLOWING TRAVELLERS BETWEEN BOTSWANA AND RHODESIA TO USE LOCAL PASSPORTS INSTEAD OF INTERNATIONAL PASSPORTS.

6. IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THE BORDER CURFEW IS MORE THAN AN INCONVENIENCE. INNOCENT BATSWANA LIVING NEAR THE BORDER HAVE BEEN HARRASSED, AND IN SOME CASES ARRESTED, OR SHOT AT, OUTSIDE CURFEW HOURS, ON THE BOTSWANA SIDE OF THE BORDER, BY RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES. THE CURFEW IS ALWAYS GIVEN AS A REASON FOR SUCH PROVOCATIVE ACTS. IT IS SURPRISING THAT MR. NTUANE IS NOT AWARE OF THIS.

7. THE ALLEGATION THAT THERE IS AN AGREEMENT ON PASSPORTS IS TOTALLY UNFOUNDED. BOTSWANA DOES NOT IMPOSE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON ITS CITIZENS WHO WISH TO TRAVEL TO ANY OF THE NEIGHBOURING

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COUNTRIES AND SUCH TRAVEL IS NOT GOVERNED BY ANY AGREEMENT. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT) 28TH JANUARY, 1976, END QUOTE.
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